

COMPRENSIÓN DE LECTURA TASK 3 (0.5 x 12 = 6 marks)

Read the following text. Then choose the word (A to P) which best fits in gaps 1 to 12 and write the correct letter in the corresponding box on the right. Three of the words are not needed. Gap 0 has been completed as an example.

Ronnie Biggs (1929-2013)

In the criminal _____ (0) of the early 1960s, Ronnie Biggs was a nobody, a foot soldier at best. In and out of trouble since his teens, he'd served time for stealing pencils from Littlewoods and _____ (1) a car. Yet he was recruited – despite the objections of several members of the 16-strong gang – to take part in one of the most audacious crimes of the 20th century: The Great Train Robbery. His role in the £2.6m crime was a minor one (“I was the tea boy,” he would say) yet he would become the most infamous of the robbers, owing to his _____ (2) escape from Wandsworth jail, and 40 years on the run from British justice.

The youngest of five children, Ronald Biggs was born in south London. His criminal career began during the War, _____ (3) bomb-damaged shops; he then progressed to burglaries, sometimes aided by his soon-to-be wife Charmian. Yet Biggs was going straight, supporting his family by working as a carpenter, when, in 1963, he approached Bruce Reynolds, whom he had met in prison, to ask for a loan. Instead, Reynolds invited him to take part in a plan to hold up the Glasgow to London mail train. Biggs agreed at once. The robbery proved far more profitable than expected. But those who attach a “specious” glamour to its masked perpetrators should note that these were violent men: during the _____ (4), the train's driver, Jack Mills, was beaten over the head with an iron bar, causing him injuries from which he never recovered.

The gang disappeared into the night – but they made some fatal errors. Their farmhouse hideout was not burnt down, as had been planned, and when police found it, they also found fingerprints, including Biggs's (on a Monopoly board). He was arrested, charged with armed robbery and sentenced to 30 years in jail. The sentence was harsh, reflecting, perhaps, the injuries _____ (5) by Mills – but also the embarrassment the crime had caused the Conservative government. Biggs was sent to Wandsworth, but he didn't stay long. In 1965, Charmian organised his escape, which involved scaling up a wall on a rope ladder, and jumping down onto a waiting furniture van. A few months later, having _____ (6) painful plastic surgery in France, he arrived in Australia, where he was joined by his wife and children.

In Australia, Biggs hoped to begin a new life with a new identity. But interest in the robbery didn't _____ (7) down, and he was soon recognised. So the ever resourceful Charmian sold her story, and paid for him to flee to Brazil. There he remained – despite attempts to kidnap him, and the efforts of Inspector Jack Slipper to bring him to justice. Slipper got close in 1974, but by then, Biggs's mistress, Raimunda, was pregnant with his son. The authorities declined to extradite him (and Charmian divorced him).

In Brazil, Biggs enjoyed the sunshine, smoked dope, and made a living by selling T-shirts _____ (8) the slogan “Rio: a great place to escape to”, and charging tourists £40 a head for a barbecue at his house. He often thought about giving himself up. In 1971, he nearly _____ (9) himself in, after his ten-year-old son Nicky – who'd stayed in Australia with Charmian – was killed in a car crash. But it wasn't until 2001, by which time he had had several strokes and was in need of healthcare, that he finally hoisted the white flag. He flew back to London on a private plane (paid for by The Sun); it was met by 60 police officers. Biggs, a _____ (10) figure in a wheelchair, was then transferred to Belmarsh jail.

Biggs's health declined further in jail but his son Michael's _____ (11) for him to be released fell on deaf ears. He was finally released in 2009, by which time he could barely walk or talk. He spent his last years in a London care home. One of the _____ (12) for keeping him in jail had been that he was "unrepentant" of his crimes; in fact, Biggs said he regretted the attack on Mills – but not the hold-up. "I am proud to have been one of the gang," he wrote, "to have worked with such eminent fellow thieves and good company."

A	AIMS	I	LOOTING
B	BEARING	J	NICKING
C	BURN	K	PLEAS
D	DARING	L	SELF-SERVING
E	DIE	M	SORRY-LOOKING
F	GROUNDS	N	SUSTAINED
G	HANDED	O	UNDERGONE
H	HEIST	P	UNDERWORLD

PUNTUACIÓN	/ 6
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0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
P												

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CONSTABULARY

£10,000 REWARD

ROBBERY

About 3 a.m. 8th August, 1963
from the Glasgow-Euston
mail train

REGISTERED PACKETS

The above reward will be paid by the Postmaster General to the first person giving such information as will lead to the apprehension and conviction of the persons responsible for this robbery.

Information to be given to the Chief Constable, Buckinghamshire Constabulary, Aylesbury (Tel.: AYLESBURY 5010), or at any Police Station.

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soluciones

TASK 1 – THE ART OF PRAISING CHILDREN

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C	B	B	C	A	A	B

TASK 2 – A PARTING

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B	A	C	C	A	B	B

TASK 3 – RONNIE BIGGS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
J	D	I	H	N	O	E	B	G	M	K	F